

First Meeting of Congress in the New Era.

Congress meets again to-day under the forms of the Constitution; but the Government has undergone a fundamental change. It is no longer Federalist—it is an elective despotism. The will of the majority, as represented in the Senate and House of Representatives, is absolute. A great revolution is accomplished, and the Constitution of 1789 survives only in form. Of course such an event could not happen without a deep sensation. Accordingly, in both sections of the Union, whose condition is affected by this change, disquietude and discontent pervade the public mind, exceeding any previous period of our history.

In two of the Southern States, South Carolina and Mississippi, whose Legislatures are in session, the revolution is recognized and denounced, and measures for averting its consequences discussed.

In Georgia, a popular vote has just been taken, which, although it has given a large majority for submission, has, perhaps, given none for approbation; whilst a considerable minority of the people, who but one year ago were unanimous in their support of the Federal Government, now declare it to be their enemy.

In Florida, an election for Congress has recently been held, in which a candidate who denounced the late measures of Congress as worthy of resistance, was defeated by a bare majority of a few hundred votes in the whole State.

In Texas, we behold a State laboring under financial embarrassment, and threatened with the sword of Federal power for asserting her territorial rights, finally induced by the fear of power, and the offer of an enormous sum of money, to surrender a vast claim to territory, and to abandon the cause of her sister States of the South.

In Alabama a multitude of public meetings have been held, to declare the hostility of the people to the late acts of Federal legislation. And in all the other Southern States, with few exceptions, the people are earnestly canvassing the policy of non-interference with the North, retaliation for past aggressions, to prevent future ones and to prepare for the contingency of a final separation, which the people of the South are compelled to contemplate. The most submissive to Federal authority of the people of the South, talk of submitting to no more aggression, and even specify the repeal of the Fugitive slave law, as an event at once so probable and so offensive, as to require them to give a protest in advance against it.

These are the results in the South of the recent change in the character of the Government.

In the North, the state of affairs is equally striking and significant. The majority flustered with victory, and spurning the authority of a law themselves can repeal, have successfully resisted one of the late measures of Congress—the only one that did not operate exclusively in their favor. And throughout almost the entire fifteen Northern States that law is a nullity.

In the progress of events which has thus far gone—we have heard much of the sanctity of the law. When Texas attempted to establish a civil jurisdiction over the territory she claimed, she was apprised that the Federal army would be marched to oppose her, and troops actually were sent off to Santa Fe. Yet at the very time when a mere assertion of jurisdiction was attempted by Texas, and thus resisted without authority of law, some hundred thousand people of the North and of foreign nations, were trespassing on the public lands of California, and were committing waste to the amount of fifty millions of dollars annually, contrary to law, and no attempt was made to prevent them, although the law expressly required their removal and punishment. On the contrary, they were still further indulged, in assuming sovereign powers, in establishing a government not for themselves merely, but to exclude the institutions of fifteen States, and this not in the territory thus occupied only, but over all the sea coast of California—and finally, they were admitted into the Union, through a breach in the Constitution, and of right, justice and equity.

The federative system, which our fathers established in 1787, was regarded by them with much solicitude and apprehension. They were afraid that it would be incompatible with the rights of the States and the liberty of the citizens. Its own champions defended it against this objection, by insisting that it left a preponderance of practical power with the States, and was more liable to fall by their power than to sacrifice them to its own. But our Federal system has a guarantee for its preservation in African slavery, whose political value was not then understood, but has since on several occasions been devoted in the most effective and salutary manner.

In African slavery there was a vast property devoted to agriculture, and to the production of exports. It was hence from the structure and function of the Federal system, incapable of receiving much favor from Government, and therefore, had no interest in enlarging its power. But it was peculiarly exposed to its burthens, and therefore, was interested in restricting its power. And experience has amply shown that, but for the influence of the slaveholding States the federative features of the General Government would have been obliterated long ago, and the system would have immediately become, as it has at length done, a consolidation.

The meeting of the greatest tribe of the white race, the Anglo-Norman-Saxon, with the black race, the two people highest and lowest in the scale of morality and civilization—a meeting in another and newly discovered hemisphere—was one of the most mysterious and pregnant events of destiny. There are in the moral and physical world frequent manifestations of the principle of dualism in the production of the most important results. The greatest results proceed from combining opposite elements. And there never has been such progress made in wealth, in population, in civilization, and yet in liberty and morality, as by these two races respectively, since they met and assumed the relation they now hold. To the race thus situated, has been allotted the production of the most important elements of modern commerce and manufactures. They have subjected a larger part of the wilderness to cultivation, than any other people in the same period—they have grown more rapidly in wealth and attained to greater wealth—and they have exercised more influence in achieving the independence and in constructing and preserving the

political institutions of this country, than their more numerous neighbors. The Southern colonies were founded rather more by the lauded glory of England, than the Northern, and at a time when feudalism was still in force. African slavery was a substitute for feudalism, rendering it more pacific, and preserving much of its virtues. And the settlement in Virginia of several of the severest sects of Christians, in South Carolina of the Huguenots, in Georgia of the Moravians, tended to reform the rather loose morality of the Cavaliers of that day. The Southern colonies had, therefore, the advantage in addition to the diversity of white and black, of a greater variety of the more wholesome elements of the white race, than the Northern. And so it was that not only the establishment, but the safety of the federative system, have been owing to the individual character, the social system, and the vast slave property of the South. And the federative system is now associated in destiny with the sagacity, the energy, the fortitude of the white race of the South, and its fitly hundred millions of property in slaves.

“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand, When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall.” And hence, we see the assault on slavery and on the rights of the States identical and coeval, and proceeding from a section whose hostility to State rights, was even anterior to its enmity to slavery.

Now, whence the Southern backwardness in meeting this assault? When it was first threatened, it was met nowhere more promptly, more unanimously, more decidedly, than in Georgia. Both parties united—and made the issue upon the admission of California—and made it very properly. That was and is the issue. Was there any fatality at Millidgeville that brought about a sudden attempt of almost a whole Legislature to misrepresent their constituents? Or have the people of Georgia, in the recent election, been seized with a sudden panic, and run off in a perfect stampede from their own previous convictions? It could not have been intended to go to the trouble and expense of a Convention to ratify the admission of California—even to say on such an occasion that no further aggression would be submitted to. Certainly no such anti-climax as that was contemplated.

And then as to Virginia. There are her resolutions year after year solemnly made and recorded. Was it ever dreamed that after all these, she was to be brought on the Federal boards, to enact the laughable afterpiece of declaring that she would quietly acquiesce in the loss of territory, of power, of equality, of safety, to secure the restitution of a few runaway negroes? Is she to submit to plunder, to insult and defiance, with no better excuse than quibble and equivocation?

If these things should happen, then the institutions and character of the South are blasted, and will soon totter to their fall. The great fabric has not been overthrown by convulsion, nor worn out by age, nor borne down in battle; but has withered even before the frosts of autumn, by the first wind from the North in September last.

We don't believe that the vitality of a great people can so suddenly give out. The apathy of case, the indolence of wealth, the sorcery of party, have lulled the South. Her voice—“Is the voice of a sluggard, I hear her complain—You have waked me too soon, I must slumber again.”

But we tell her in the language of one of her own arch enemies, that “a voice has spoken in the ear of this mighty nation, saying: Sleep no more.”

Congress “has murdered sleep.”

It is stated that a Federal Grand Jury in New Orleans has indicted Governor QUITMAN, of Mississippi, for aiding the late expedition against Cuba—and that he can be arrested by a United States Marshal, and taken from the gubernatorial chair of Mississippi, as a prisoner, to New Orleans, to be tried. It would open the climax of Federal justice and Southern equality, for one Marshal of the United States to arrest the Chief Magistrate of a Southern State at its seat of government, when another Federal Marshal had found it impracticable to arrest a runaway negro at the seat of government of Massachusetts. What a glorious Union, to think of executing its process on white Governors, whilst defied by black fugitives.

The editor of the Union talks of the formation of a new party to preserve the Union, but is perplexed for a name. He prefers the title of “Union and State Rights Society,” but is not sure that “Non-Intervention Society” would not be better. As the object of such a party is to uphold the late measures of Congress—measures which destroy the Federative character of the Government, which is essential to the Union as it was, and convert it into an elective empire—we propose that the new party be called “The Empire Club.”

The Washington Union thinks we take comfort in the defeat of the resistance party, in Georgia, because it will promote dissolution.—If we were in favor of dissolution, we should take comfort, not only in the triumph of submission in Georgia, but in the passage of the Compromise bills—since the adoption of those measures, and the hearty submission to them in Georgia and other Southern States, will encourage the North to make such further and outrageous aggression as even Southern submission cannot stand—although it can stand almost any thing.

Governor SHELLEY, of Kentucky, once said that the people will stand a bad Government, but when it becomes d—d bad, they won't stand it. The Governor was of the last generation. He did not know that our country was so progressive, that the worse the Government became, the better some people would like it.

MORE INDIAN DEPREDACTIONS IN TEXAS.—The Indians, it appears, have lately been committing depredations in the vicinity of Fredericksburg. The San Antonio Ledger of the 7th inst. says:—

“A German girl was shot through the arm by an arrow, which inflicted a severe but not fatal wound. A German who had been engaged in bringing her to the military post, had his horses stolen from his encampment, and one of his oxen killed by an arrow. Some seven or eight horses had also been stolen from a party of Caddoes encamped in the neighborhood. They took the trail and followed it to the Waco Village—lurking around, they availed themselves of an opportunity to steal horses to the number they had lost, and a few others in addition, to indemnify themselves for their trouble. Our informant says that the Caddoes informed him that the Comanches are extremely desirous to fight, and that the Wacos are even more hostile than the Comanches.”

“When I reflect upon the pernicacity with which the assaults upon our rights have been for years prosecuted, the evident increase of anti-slavery sentiment in the North, and the excitement there pervading nearly all classes against the law to provide for the extradition of fugitive slaves, I have little hope left, that the Government, indispensably necessary to our safety, will be justified by a majority, flushed with recent vic-

torious, and encouraged by apparent divisions among ourselves. Yet, to leave no unit at consolidation untried, and still further to unite with us these of our own people, who still look for a returning sense of justice in the North, let the propositions be distinctly made to the people of the non-slaveholding States, to remedy the wrong so far as may be in the power of Congress, by obtaining from California concessions south of 36.30; or otherwise; and to consent to such amendments of the Federal Constitution, as shall hereafter simply secure the rights of the slaveholding States from misconstruction, and from further aggression.

But, in the event of refusal, I do not hesitate to express my decided opinion, that the only effectual remedy to evils which must continue to grow from year to year, is to be found in the prompt and peaceable secession of the aggrieved States.

The probability of the ultimate necessity of a resort to this effective and unquestionable right of secession, should be kept in view, whatever measures may be adopted by this State, either alone, or in concert with her sister States, to remedy existing evils. In the meantime, and as early as possible, the highest importance should be attached to some common centre of opinion and action should be authoritatively established.—This may be effected by the conventions of the several seceding States, providing for the organization, and submission of a joint memorial to Congress, and a joint periodical appointment or election of a committee of safety for each State to consist of a member to their Senators and Representatives in Congress. These committees, whose duty it should be, periodically to assemble at some central point for the transaction of business, should be invested with adequate powers, absolute or contingent, to act for their respective States, upon all questions connected with the preservation and protection of their domestic institutions and their equal rights as sovereign States. Such a body of men, even if clothed with the authority of but two or three States, would command respect, and secure quiet and peaceable results to their determinations.

I have thus ventured to present some suggestions to the people of the non-slaveholding States, which may be modified or changed by their own representatives in the Georgia convention, which will shortly meet for the purpose of taking the same important questions under consideration.

Under our system of government, happily the right and privilege of determining these grave and momentous questions, involving the honor and quality of the States, is reserved to the people of all its citizens, whether rich or poor, slaveholder or non-slaveholder, belongs alone to the people. To them the appeal must be made, and their deliberate voice must control and direct the action of the State. I therefore respectfully recommend to the Legislature, to provide for an expression of the will of the people, by the call of a convention at an early day. In this, there will be no danger, for the people of the non-slaveholding States, all good citizens, whatever may be their opinions, will acquiesce. All will vie with one another in patriotic zeal to maintain the dignity and integrity of the State.

Ministers of peace, and peace-makers, be united, and harmonious councils, and wise energetic action, will secure her safety. The very important and vital character of the questions, which are forced upon our consideration, should lead us to consider the measures, not merely palliative, but effectual and permanent. There may be some temporary remedial measures, within the power of the Legislature. If such can be devised, seek to execute them, in co-operation with you in their application.”

Letter of Hon. Robert J. Walker.

The recent Union meetings at the North and South, have elicited a vast amount of rignarole, twaddle, profession, and hypocrisy, from distinguished men. We have not seen in all their letters a better spirit, or more good sense than in that of Mr. WALKER, to the Philadelphia meeting. In an evil hour Mr. WALKER gave his sanction to the late compromise measures—measures which the genius of discord must have inspired—and which if they are to stand, will be an insuperable barrier to the harmony, the peace, the safety and durability of the Union.

NEW YORK, Nov. 21, 1850.

GENTLEMEN: Your letter of the 11th inst., has been received, requesting me, in behalf of the “Friends of the Constitution and the Union, without distinction of party,” to attend a public meeting to be held by them this evening in your city. Concurring with you most fully in the noble purpose of this meeting, I deeply regret that it is not in my power to attend. I thank you, gentlemen, for the kind and favorable manner in which you have been pleased to speak of my humble efforts to uphold the Constitution and perpetuate the Union. The Constitution is the only basis upon which the Union can be maintained. It is the constitution that makes the Union; and to overthrow the one is to destroy the other. If there are any who believe that the Union can be maintained on any other basis, let them prove it. The sacred guarantees of the Constitution are overthrown, it is a dangerous and fatal error. Among the guarantees contained in that instrument—and without which it is well known that it never could have been framed—is that clause requiring the surrender of fugitives from service. The fulfillment of this clause, in the spirit of the Constitution, is the only basis of honor and good faith; and all who would seek to violate, evade, or disregard its provisions are enemies of the Constitution and the Union.

The purpose for which your meeting is convened is the most grave and momentous ever submitted for the consideration of the American people. It is a question whether we will continue to have a Constitution, a country and a Union, or whether all shall be overthrown. I deeply regret to say that all are in imminent peril—that we are, in fact, hurrying on to the brink of a precipice—and that, unless the friends of the Constitution and of the Union, shall take prompt and effective action, the fate of the Union will soon rest on a tottering base.

I am, therefore, prepared to say that a week, or a month, or a year may not witness some one of the States, by a popular movement, nearly unanimous, withdrawing, or at least attempting to withdraw, from the Union? And what will be the remedy? Will civil war preserve or restore the Union? Will the sword be the only way to save it? Can a vanquished State, even if she can be vanquished, ever again become a member of the Federal Union? No, my countrymen; let us learn, ere it be too late, that this never can be a Union of victor and vanquished, of sovereign and subject States; but that it must be a Union of equals, in which each State is a sovereign, and each citizen a sovereign.

The Governor then states that in view of the dangers that menace the State, its sovereignty, constitutional rights and institutions, he felt called on to convene the Legislature, and then proceeds to say:—

“To devise and carry into effect the best means of defense for the past, and to obtain certain security for the future, I recommend that a legal convention of the people of the State should be called, with full and ample powers to take into consideration our Federal relations, the aggressions which have been committed upon the rights of the Southern States, the dangers which threaten our domestic institutions, and all kindred subjects, and jointly with other States, or separately, to adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the safety and safety of the State, and effectually correct the evils complained of. A convention thus assembled, and representing the sovereignty of the State, would of course possess plenary powers, uncontrolled by any insidious or restrictive measures which the Legislature might interpose. It might therefore be sufficient for me, to recommend the passage of proper laws to bring into existence such a convention, leaving the mode and time of its assembling entirely to their wisdom when thus assembled. To this high power, representing the majesty of the people, and constituted the proper exponents of their deliberate will, all public authorities and all good citizens would yield cheerful and prompt obedience.”

“When I reflect upon the pernicacity with which the assaults upon our rights have been for years prosecuted, the evident increase of anti-slavery sentiment in the North, and the excitement there pervading nearly all classes against the law to provide for the extradition of fugitive slaves, I have little hope left, that the Government, indispensably necessary to our safety, will be justified by a majority, flushed with recent vic-

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of toil and suffering, and amid sacrifices the most profuse of blood and treasure, that this Union was maintained by our forefathers; and we are unworthy to be called their sons if we will make no effort, and submit to no sacrifices, to preserve the priceless heritage. The eyes of the American people are upon you. The friends of the Union look to you for succor and encouragement. They look to Philadelphia now, as did those who have gone before us, and the patriots and sages of the revolution were assembled at your city in 1776 and 1787. Great was the week which this was accomplished; and the American people look now for a re-signing and re-asserting of the Constitution in your city. Proclaim it now, in tones which shall reach every State, every city, and every county, that the Constitution and the Union can and shall be preserved. Tell your brethren of the South that Pennsylvania will stand firm as her everlasting hills in maintaining all their rights under the Constitution. Say to the countrymen of Washington and Jefferson, of Madison and Monroe, of Henry and of Mason, of Marion and Sumter, that your hearts are linked to theirs by every tie of interest and affection, and that Pennsylvania will roll back the tide of fanaticism which threatens to deluge in blood our common country.

Fellow-citizens, I venture thus to address you as one of your countrymen, invited to participate in your meeting. I speak to you as a native of Pennsylvania, whose soil was defended by a departed sire in the war of the revolution, the week which this was accomplished; and the American people look now for a re-signing and re-asserting of the Constitution in your city. Proclaim it now, in tones which shall reach every State, every city, and every county, that the Constitution and the Union can and shall be preserved. Tell your brethren of the South that Pennsylvania will stand firm as her everlasting hills in maintaining all their rights under the Constitution. Say to the countrymen of Washington and Jefferson, of Madison and Monroe, of Henry and of Mason, of Marion and Sumter, that your hearts are linked to theirs by every tie of interest and affection, and that Pennsylvania will roll back the tide of fanaticism which threatens to deluge in blood our common country.

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of toil and suffering, and amid sacrifices the most profuse of blood and treasure, that this Union was maintained by our forefathers; and we are unworthy to be called their sons if we will make no effort, and submit to no sacrifices, to preserve the priceless heritage. The eyes of the American people are upon you. The friends of the Union look to you for succor and encouragement. They look to Philadelphia now, as did those who have gone before us, and the patriots and sages of the revolution were assembled at your city in 1776 and 1787. Great was the week which this was accomplished; and the American people look now for a re-signing and re-asserting of the Constitution in your city. Proclaim it now, in tones which shall reach every State, every city, and every county, that the Constitution and the Union can and shall be preserved. Tell your brethren of the South that Pennsylvania will stand firm as her everlasting hills in maintaining all their rights under the Constitution. Say to the countrymen of Washington and Jefferson, of Madison and Monroe,